



The Gut in Balance

The gut microbial community has been called “a forgotten organ” because of its role in facilitating human health—a role that is still being elucidated but that nevertheless is emerging as important.³⁴ Colonization of the gut begins at birth, and the microbial community that develops over time is shaped by many influences, including the individual’s genetic makeup, age, foods and pharmaceuticals consumed, lifestyle, and more. A healthy gut contains a balanced mixture of many commensal (beneficial) species. Under certain circumstances an unnatural shift in this balance can cause microbes that are normally benign or beneficial to induce inflammation. These situationally pathogenic microbes are termed “pathobionts.”³⁵

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